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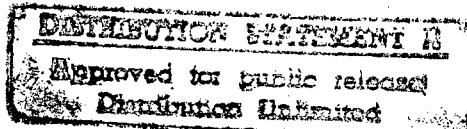
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DEVELOPMENT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK RESEARCH INSTITUTE
FOR PEDAGOGY

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FOREWORD

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK RESEARCH INSTITUTE
FOR PEDAGOGY

[Following is the translation of an article entitled "Patnact let prace vyzkumného ustavu pedagogického." (English version above) by Dr. Vlasta Drchalova in Pedagogika (Pedagogy), Vol IX, No 4, Prague 1960, pages 462-470.]

During the days when our schools celebrate the 15th anniversary of their free development under the People's Democracy, there is another anniversary to be celebrated, an anniversary, which is closely related to this free development of our schools--the 15th anniversary of the Research Institute for Pedagogy in Prague. Fifteen years by itself is not a long period; but if we measure comparatively the development of our whole society during this period, we come to the conclusion that there have been few such periods in our whole history. Such a conclusion makes us pause and weigh the tasks behind us as well as those ahead of us.

It is impossible to present an exhaustive picture of the present, past, and future tasks of the Institute in all their aspects in a short periodical article. Consequently, I shall limit myself to a short presentation as to how the Institute was founded, what its main goals are, and how to evaluate its work.

The Establishment of the Research Institute
for Pedagogy and its Organization

As I have said in the introduction, the VUP (Research Institute for Pedagogy) is closely related to our schools.

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This close relationship exists not only because the Institute actually works for the schools but also because of the initial intentions. For many years the teachers, and mainly the most progressive group of them, the teachers of the grade schools and the high schools, dreamed of having a center for their theoretical pedagogical work. This dream has been voiced at every teacher's convention since the end of the last century; an attempt to form such an institute was made during the first years of the First Republic; during the Nazi occupation part of the teachers, led by the underground Communist Party, finally set the foundation for the development of the schools in the reborn, socially just socialist state. All these preparations during the occupation had three main tasks: a unified state school system, university education for all teachers, and the establishment of the VUP. All three of these tasks represented old demands of the teachers, fought for but never won during the First Republic. During the occupation these tasks were thoughtfully planned and prepared. However, they could have been realized only after the people took over the government of the country. The first to be realized was the demand to establish the VUP. An administrative order issued 25 May 1945 by the Ministry of Education (headed by Zdenek Nejedly) explicitly states that "this Institute is put into existence to centralize and support scientific research in the field of education, to utilize its findings, and thus to improve the educational and pedagogical activities in the interests of the nation and the state." [See note]. The structural plans and programs of the Institute's activities were prepared during the occupation by J. Trajer and a group of his collaborators. These plans were published right after the Revolution by the Central Teachers Council, which was the revolutionary organ of the underground teachers units and which was led by L. Koubek. A teachers convention approved by a resolution its establishment in July 1945.

([Note:] Decree No 25988, Para II. A., Vestnik mso (Bulletin of the Ministry of Schools and Education), No I, 1945, page 10.)

As soon as the administrative order has been issued the Institute started functioning. During the first weeks, the activities were mainly of an organizational character. The activities took place first in the Teachers Center in Vysehrad; later they were transferred to its present building in Mikulandska Street. In June, the minister named as its first director J. Vana, who worked with the teachers during the war. During the summer more personnel had been added to the staff and by 1 September there were 45 employees. By the end of the year there were a hundred people working, and the

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number gradually increased to 133 during 1946. The number became stabilized at 130-140 for many consecutive years.

On 27 October 1945 the Institute was approved by a presidential decree, which was issued subsequent to the proposal made by Minister Z. Nejedly, who acted upon the directive given him by the Party. On this occasion, the Institute was unified with the territorial institute for Morava, which was established in Brno in June. The Brno Institute became an affiliated organization under its own administration. The Brno Institute was given the task of solving school problems for Morava and Silesia. Slovakia had no institute of its own at first. The existing institute was established in 1947.

Originally, the Prague Institute was intended to comprise the whole state, and its organization was impressive. According to the organizational plan published in September 1945, which was a variation of the original plan recommended by the Central Teachers Council, it was supposed to have seven sections divided into a number of sub-sections. These were the sections: I Section, for general problems of education and pedagogy; II Section, for student care and student analysis; III Didactical Section, comprising all grades, including the universities; IV Section, for teaching art; V Section, statistics; VI, Library and archive; and VII, Museum. Some of these sections have never been created, some only partially. The organizational statute published by the Ministry of Education in May 1947 planned only five sections. I Section, for school organization and statistics; II Section, for pedagogical anthropology; III Section, for applied pedagogy and didactics; IV Section, for planning new school buildings, classroom furnishings, teaching aids and textbooks; V Section, for art education. The Brno subsidiary was supposed to have only three sections: pedagogical anthropology, applied pedagogy and didactics, and art education. In other words, the Brno subsidiary was supposed to be a smaller edition of the Prague Institute. However, in time, a division of labor between these two has been designed. The Prague Institute dealt with the problems of pedagogy and didactics of the grade schools, secondary schools and, for a certain time, trade schools. The Brno Institute dealt with out of school activities, art, and the schools for children who required special care. This relationship lasted until the liquidation of the Brno Institute in 1958, when part of its staff was transferred to Prague. The final relationship and organization of these two institutes reflected practical necessities. There were other circumstances which influenced the organization of the Institute, namely the creation of the Cabinet for Pedagogy affiliated with the CSAV (Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences) in 1954. After three years, this Cabinet had been

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set up as an independent organization. Again, another division of labor had to be designed. In 1958 the Cabinet became a part of the unified Institute and took over the education of teachers and school workers. The last reorganization resulted in the creation of these sections: I, Pedagogy and Psychology; II, Pre-school and Out of School Education; III, Education in Labor Problems and Polytechnical Education; IV, Esthetics; V, Hygiene, Physical Education and Education of Children Requiring Special Care; VI, Social Science; VII, Languages; VIII, Natural Sciences and Mathematics; IX, School Buildings, Classroom Furnishings, Teaching Aids; and X, Advanced Education for Teachers, and School Administration. As a supplementary section of the Institute an economic-administrative section was added. The Pedagogical museum and the J.A. Komensky Library are parts of the Institute in terms of fiscal administration; otherwise, however, these have their own administration.

The Objectives of the Institute

The demands of the Ministry of Education, which had under its main consideration the needs of the new Czechoslovak school system, influenced the objectives of the Institute. In the first place, the Institute was required to make suggestions and supply the basic material for norms issued by the Ministry. Suggestions concerning the curricula for schools, basic plans, and outlines for textbooks were the main contribution. This type of work became the core of activities of the Institute. The Institute actually prepared for the grade schools and secondary schools all the curricula, outlines, and textbooks ever published by the Ministry. All temporary plans and outlines issued after the May Revolution, and all plans, outlines, and textbooks for the unified school system which was set up by the law of 1948, were the work of the Institute. The Institute reorganized the textbooks following the Party resolution of 1951, prepared the plans, outlines, and textbooks for the eleven-year high school which was set up by the law of 1953, and finally reorganized them following the resolution of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1955, concerning the further development of the school system, and the one in April 1959, concerning the necessity of closer relationship of schools with the outside life. Nevertheless, the Institute's main objectives--research and experimental work--were not forgotten. Its first plan of activities for the years 1947-48, established in the second part of 1946, was closely related to the two-year economic plan of Premier K. Gottwald. Thus, the VUP was probably the first scientific institution which

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planned its activities. A number of research and theoretical works was the direct result of this planning. Not all of them would stand up now under the present criteria, because they were still influenced by the decadent bourgeois science. As a matter of fact, some of them were never completed, because after the new school legislation it was necessary to supply schools with all the material required by that legislation. However, some of the works preserved their value. Later, when the Institute worked mainly on outlines and textbooks, research and experimental work were carried on in a manner I am mentioning below.

The character and quality level of the work of the VUP was determined not only by the needs of the Ministry but also by the development of science, mainly the science of pedagogy. The VUP was not the only center of pedagogical work. Already in the fall of 1945 the decree of the President legislated as mandatory a university education for teachers. Departments of pedagogy were set up at the universities. These departments became independent colleges in 1953. To have eleven or twelve independent colleges dealing exclusively with pedagogy in the years of 1953-59 was quite a difference from the times of the First Republic, when each college of philosophy at the universities in Prague, Brno, and Bratislava had a department of pedagogy. Such positive conditions for the development of science may be found only in a socialist state which starts with the thesis that socialism is the result of science and that science is the building material of socialism. Despite all of this, pedagogy did not achieve the level which had been anticipated. There were several reasons for it with roots in the past. In the first place, there was a shortage of theoreticians which was the result of the poor quality of the universities during the First Republic. This condition became even worse during the period of the Protectorate, when not only could new generations not be trained, but also a number of outstanding scientists in the field of pedagogy were killed: O. Blazek and Prof Uher among others.

The shortage of theoreticians on the faculties of the universities led to the overloading of the professors with teaching assignments; consequently, the professors had no time for research work. Also, misconceptions as to the scope of pedagogy, i.e., should pedagogy be limited to pure science or should it include teaching of specialized students, hindered the development. The same situation existed in the pedagogical institute where the personnel consisted of teachers trained in grade and secondary schools (to a lesser extent teachers of trade schools and gymnasiums). They all had to be introduced to scientific methods and increase their qualifications. Also, a number of tasks of administrative character, completion

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of which was demanded by the Ministry, made the introduction of scientific methods more difficult.

As to the scope of pedagogy itself, the remnants of Western orientation, visible on the university level as well as in the institutes and in practical application in schools, were hindering progress. A decisive turn in orientation occurred after February; a final victory over the reactionary elements made it possible to apply soviet pedagogical methods.

The VUP applied these methods while working on the plans, outlines, and textbooks in 1948. The experiences of the VUP delegation sent to the USSR shortly before February, led by VUP Director J. Vana, were utilized to the utmost. Also, the practical experiences of many people who came to the VUP from the field and who cooperated with specialists in different scientific disciplines were highly utilized.

The outlines of programs and the textbooks were forwarded to schools without any preliminary testing of their utility. However, there was no other way of doing it, since the schools had to be reorganized immediately. But the new experiences with untested teaching materials were being collected and analyzed. The cooperation of newly formed pedagogical councils on lower [school] levels was used by VUP for this purpose. These experiences were then applied toward developing and improving the subsequently edited material. This happened in 1951, following the resolution of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party concerning the textbooks; and again in 1953, when outlines for the new eleven-year higher-level school were worked on. At that time, completed research in several subject-matters allowed deeper insight into the problems of selection of teaching material [See note]. But again, there was very little experimenting in the field and the inadequacies of the teaching outlines became apparent. The supposition that the same quality of education may be achieved by students in eleven years instead in thirteen proved itself unsound, mainly because not all of the conditions necessary to fulfill this supposition were achieved. The main reasons for the lack of success were the overloading of students with too much material and the demands on and expectations from students who simply were not mature enough to grasp the study material. Also, the teaching methods were not adequate. The resulting complaints led the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party to issue another resolution in June 1955, which dealt with these problems and also emphasized the lack of concentration on esthetic and physical education. This resolution empowered the VUP to prepare new outlines and textbooks to be introduced in the schools in 1960-61. This time, there was more time for research and experimental work. New material was

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tested in 83 experimental schools and the inadequacies eliminated. The scope of such research and testing had to be shared with other pedagogical institutions because of the tremendous volume of experimental work. That part of work which could not be conducted by the members of the VUP was delegated to the teaching staffs of experimental schools, who worked along the lines of directives given to them by VUP and analyzed the results achieved by using the new outlines and textbooks. The over-all organization of the research was conducted by the Central Pedagogical Commission, consisting of members of research institutes, pedagogical schools and teaching staffs of first-through-third-grade schools. The Commission became the organ of both the VUP and the Cabinet of Pedagogy. (This Cabinet later became the Pedagogical Institute of J. A. Komensky.)

[Note:] Jelinek-Becka-Tesitelova-Metys: "The Role of Grammar in Teaching Correct Spelling (Writing) in Grade Schools"; A. Lebedova: "The Historical Learning and the Thought Process of the Students in Grade Schools"; both articles in the volume Za zlepseň prospechu na škole narodni (How to Improve Learning in Grade Schools), SPN 1953; and Strizova-Chicha-Cipro: "Three Studies on Teaching Russian", SPN 1953; J. Jiranek, et al: "Psychological Problems of Reading and Writing for Beginners," SPN 1955.)

During the time the research was in progress, the XIth Congress of the CPC issued a resolution concerning the lengthening of legal school attendance to nine years, which, together with the new perspectives gained from the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, influenced the work of the VUP. The Congress pointed out that the communist society of tomorrow will need people with better over-all education and that it is imperative to bring education closer to practical life experience. At the same time it became obvious that the road to higher education does not necessarily lead through the three upper classes of the twelve-year school system, but that it may lead through a system of higher trade schools and a system of adult evening courses. The April 1959 resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia dealt with these problems of education and gave a set of new directives to the VUP.

These directives changed the original school educational-concepts which formed the basis for research in 1955. Because the time limit for the introduction of the new school system remained the same, there was little time left for experimentation. Consequently, the research methods had to be changed and the new system will not be the result of research to the same degree as originally planned; also, there will be no time to test it in the field. However, because of the

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gradual introduction of the new system, experiences gained during the first year in the first grade will be applied in the preparation of work for other grades. Also, accuracy of scientific research now is hindered by the fact that the students tested have different backgrounds from those who will go through the new twelve-year program from the beginning. Despite all these difficulties, we have sufficient accumulation of data to make conclusions and to set up norms. This became possible mainly because of cooperation of the VUP with other institutes and schools; also, because sufficient data were available as a result of similar research in the USSR and other People's democracies, which tailor their school systems in a similar manner.

Because of these tasks of preparing outlines for the new school system, the VUP is constantly in close touch with all the pressing problems of our school system and our education in general. However, this close relationship of the VUP with the everyday problems of the schools has certain disadvantages. The research workers have no time to perceive and analyze the scope and depth of the existing problems. Because of this, the schools do not fully benefit from the research. The results of research may be applied only generally. To give at least one example: In cooperation with the Cabinet of Pedagogy at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, an analytical research of the basic subject-matter had been made under the direction of O. Chlup. The result of this research was used and applied to determine the scope of the study material for the new eleven-year experimental school. But the research has never been completed. In the rest of the schools it was left to the discretion of the teachers to determine how much of the old material should be used. This, of course, left too much room for purely subjective decisions. These problems necessarily affected the relationship between the teachers and the VUP itself. Although the teachers wanted the VUP to be established, and although the great majority of its staff are former teachers, much criticism occurred. The teachers did not feel that the Institute's work in planning outlines and textbooks was of much help to them because they were left with general norms and directives which they themselves had to interpret and apply in practical classwork. Only very recently, when the norms and the directives became more specific and new textbooks were published, did the teachers begin to understand the contribution of the VUP and agree with the experimental part of its work. Also, although the staff of the VUP contributed to the work in the field with handbooks, articles, lectures, and directives, it is felt that this type of work should be given more depth and volume, so that it would become an organic part of the Institute's efforts.

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Despite all these difficulties, a number of research and experimental studies was published. Among those published independently, the following are of special importance: A. Vodicka, editor: Sbornik somatometrickych práci (Collection of Somatometrical Works), 1954; V. Krauman: Skolni ucebna a její zářízení (The Classroom and Its Furnishings), 1954; B. Kujal: Chlupova kritika burzoasni pedagogiky (Chlup's Critical Works on Bourgeois Pedagogy), Collection of articles in honor of the 80th anniversary of Academician O. Chlupa, 1955; J. Trajer, editor: Polytechnicke vyučování a rostlinna výroba (Polytechnical Teaching Methods and Agricultural Production), 1956; V. Cicha, editor: Základní problémy vyučování ruskine na škole narodni (Basic Problems of Teaching the Russian Language in Lower Grades), 1957; J. Kabele, editor: Výzkum učiva matematiky ve 2. a 6. post. ročníku (Research in the Subject Matter of Mathematics in the Second and Sixth Grades), 1957; J. Jelinek, editor: Vyučování českemu jazyku v 8. post. ročníku (Teaching of the Czech Language in the Eighth Grades), 1957; M. Cipro: O mravní výchově mládeže (The Moral Education of Youth), 1957; J. Meisner, editor: K psychologii deti vyzadujících zvláštní péče (Psychology of Children Requiring Special Care), 1958; F. Holesovsky: Práce s obrazem na mateřské škole (Visual Aid Education in Kindergarten), 1958; A. Vodicka, editor: Príspevky k teorii učebnic prírodních věd (Contribution to the Theory of Textbooks in the Field of Natural Sciences), 1958. A number of other studies is ready for publication. Because the publication of some theoretical works was met with technical difficulties at the State Pedagogical Publishing House, the VUP will start this year to publish its own studies. The first book published by the VUP will be a volume commemorating the 15th anniversary of the VUP then, in 1960 and in 1961, works dealing with the reorganization of schools and new research will also be published.

The work concerning the reorganization of schools will not be accomplished by the study of outlines and textbooks only. A theoretical analysis of problems will be part of the work. The new concept of the twelve-year school has to be analyzed in its over-all aspects and also as regards the individual subjects. Because of the requirement of nine years of compulsory school attendance, the new school is divided in two cycles. The basic nine-year school and the high school (middle school). Other participants in this research will be the staffs of the VUP in Bratislava and of the Institute for Specialized Learning in Prague. The details of the plan were already discussed by the teachers in all the krajs. Discussions were organized by the Ministry of Education and by the Teachers Trade Union. The results

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of these discussions will be utilized in subsequent works. In the new school system a number of related problems will have to be solved. The relationships of general, polytechnical, and specialized education; the coordination among several subjects; the influence of physical and mental work on the development of personality; and hygienic, psychological, and pedagogical factors, will have to be taken in consideration. The questions of esthetics in education, the problems of communist education in school and out of school, the advantages and disadvantages of the various forms of school housing and the forms of organization of the students bodies have to be studied. All these problems will be tackled within the next five years. As far as these problems are a part of the so-called state plan, other institutes will help to solve them. Cooperation of institutes in the fields of psychology, physiology, and economics will be coordinated with the work of pedagogical institutes.

The Significance of the Work of VUP

In order to evaluate the significance of the work of the VUP there are other results to be considered besides the publications and the work for the Ministry of Education. The attitudes which were taken while approaching the problems have to be considered. Since the establishment of the VUP more than half of the staff have been communists. This was of special significance before the February period, when plans for future schools were made. During the legislative discussions the Clerical Party aimed to preserve the parochial schools, and the National Socialist [Benes] Party demanded differentiation, thus both were fighting the principle of unification of schools. The VUP, under the leadership of the CPC, fought for the unified state school system and pointed out that differentiation according to school grades was supporting the principle of class differentiation which runs completely against the principle of unification. The resulting newspaper fight was led by F. Kahuda, member of the staff of the VUP, who wrote a number of articles in Nova Skola (New School) and Skolstvi a Osveta (School and Education), analyzing and fighting his adversaries in his leading article published in the magazine Teorie a praxe (Theory and Practice). In the unions the fight was led by B. Kujal. Most of his articles appeared in Skolstvi a Osveta. While Stransky was the Minister of Education, the VUP was the main adversary of his school system administration, because of its progressive tendencies. The CP also gave the VUP a mandate to help the teachers union and to give teachers the proper orientation. Because of this, the VUP had been looked upon

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as an enemy by the reactionaries, and the staff of the VUP was subjected to various political pressures. In February, when the reactionaries were defeated, and Z. Nejedly came back as Minister, the staff of the VUP became the most important factor in preparing the new unified school legislation. The VUP fought for the politically correct approach to the principles of school organization, and also for the same approach to the inner activities in the schools themselves. First attempts were made following the law of 1948, during the work on outlines and textbooks; in these attempts the principles of socialist pedagogy were clarified. The new aspects of school education, educational theories, and the role of textbooks in education were presented to the teachers in separate booklets issued and forwarded to the teachers together with the teaching material. In these booklets the experiences of Soviet schools and soviet pedagogical science were utilized. A number of translations was made from the periodical Sovetskaya pedagogika (Soviet Pedagogy) and published during a period of several years in the periodical Pedagogika as a service to our interest specialists. A discussion of the philosophical basis of present pedagogy was launched in Nova skola (New school) in 1949, and in Pedagogika in 1952. The discussion was led by B. Kujal's "Socialist Pedagogy" and by Prihoda's "The Scientific Principles of Socialist Pedagogy" in Nova skola (IV, No. 7-8, pages 193-195). The discussion was supported by J. Novotny, J. Novak, B. Uher, F. Kahuda, and K. Angelis. The discussion led to a conclusion that the result of scientific pedagogy is Marxism-Leninism and not bourgeois philosophy, and that pedagogy must be in agreement with the evolution of our society. The discussion dealt with relationships between our and Soviet pedagogy, the principles of individuality and equality, and the Marxist interpretation of these principles. The second discussion started under the auspices of B. Kujal, the leading editor of Pedagogika, by M. Cipro's article "The Battle with the Bourgeois Pedagogy in 1945-48". Several staff members of the VUP participated. (J. Trajer, J. Korejs, F. Holesovsky, T. Henek, O. Strumhaus, and V. Drchalova). Several other specialists joined the discussion (F. Kahuda, J. Vana, J. Kopac, J. Popelova, and F. Budsky). The discussion pointed out that the so-called reformed pedagogy, which still had its defendants in our schools, is a bourgeois remnant. A great number of teachers considered the reformed pedagogy as progressive and in need of further development. Some of them were only using the methods of the reformed pedagogy and defining some of its principles without knowing its source. The discussions clarified the bourgeois character of reformed pedagogy and led to the

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removal of some didactical methods which were not scientific (universal method of reading, testing). Also, they helped to clarify the concepts of the unified school and socialist education. The staff members of the VUP were always aware that the problems of the school (scientific or organizational), have to be dealt with by people who are educated politically. This awareness helped them cultivate their professional and political qualifications. The leading members of the VUP, the unions, and the Party supported this trend. A number of coordinated seminars, lectures, meetings, and discussions helped to fulfill this task.

Today, the VUP has a collective of workers who have practical school experience, who keep educating themselves professionally and politically, and who have research and theoretical experience. Without the VUP, the organization of our school system would hardly keep up with the demands of the present rapidly developing society.

What is needed is some sort of equilibrium between the obligations of the VUP as an advisory body of the Ministry of Education and the long-term projected scientific obligations. It is scientific research only which in long run will guarantee the solution of our pedagogical problems and the growth of scientific education of the staff. This we need in order to solve the problems brought about by the development of our society.

If we look back after the first fifteen years, we can see some tremendous changes in our school system. There has been growth in both quality and quantity. The highest education is accessible to everybody--not only on paper, but in reality. The school system is unified; there is not one set of schools for the rich and another for the poor. We have a system of adult education which became increasingly important. We have a network of secondary schools much denser than ever before; we have more kindergartens, more third grade schools, more universities. The concept of education is based on scientific principles in all schools and further improvement is sought all the time. We have scientific institutes to deal with these problems; we have compulsory university education for the teachers of 1st and 2nd grade; and we do care for their post graduate education. Not all the goals have been fulfilled in the effort to further the development of scientific pedagogy and the revolutionary changes in the school system. The Party and the government help a great deal. The staff of the VUP wishes only to perform all their present and future duties in a manner compatible to the high demands expected from the socialist science of pedagogy.

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